



June 2, 2014

**KANSAS BULLETIN NO. KS300-14-28**

**SUBJECT: LTP—Fiscal Year 2014—Environmental Quality Incentives Program—Water Enhancement Project Areas—Announcement and Implementation**

**Action required by:** (Field Offices [FOs])  
June 13, 2014  
July 7, 2014

**Action required by:** (Area Offices [AOs])  
August 1, 2014

**Action required by:** (State Office [SO])  
June 20, 2014

**Purpose:** Provide guidance on the implementation of the Water Enhancement Project Areas ranking criteria and eligible conservation practices (CPs) previously known as Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP)

**Expiration Date:** September 30, 2015

**Background**

The Agricultural Act of 2014 (2014 Farm Bill) does not include AWEP as an offered farm bill program. Funds allocated to the approved AWEP project areas for (FY) 2014 have expired. Existing AWEP partnership agreements will be honored through calendar year 2014 and will compete as EQIP general applications for the remainder of the FY.

**Project Areas**

The allocation will be distributed among the following approved Kansas AWEP project areas following the formula developed from the amounts requested in their AWEP proposals. Five percent will go toward historically underserved (HU):

- Equus Beds Groundwater Management District (GMD) No. 2
- Southwest Kansas GMD No. 3
- Big Bend GMD No. 5

(more)

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The eligible priority areas are outlined on Attachment 1. The entire GMD No. 2 is eligible under their proposal. The eligible areas in GMD No. 3 are located in parts of Finney, Ford, Grant, Gray, Haskell, Kearney, Meade, Morton, Seward, Stanton, and Stevens Counties. The GMD No. 5 designated the Rattlesnake Creek subbasin as their project area.

GMD No. 5 is offering additional payments to participants. Questions from participants on these payments will be referred to the GMD.

### **Program Deadlines**

The FY2014 Water Enhancement Project Areas application evaluation period cutoff date was **March 21, 2014**.

All applications were ranked and contracts uploaded to ProTracts by **April 11, 2014**.

Application evaluation peer reviews were completed by **April 18, 2014**. This review focused on the ranking and eligibility of the application.

Applications were ready for funding decisions by close of business **April 25, 2014**.

If an applicant makes a decision to change their fund code to the Ogallala Aquifer Initiative, they have a deadline of **June 13, 2014** to submit their request. If a fund code change is made, ranking and reviews must be completed again.

The SO Programs Staff will make funding decisions by close of business **June 20, 2014**.

Approved applications over \$150,000 will follow guidance issued in Bulletin KS300-14-41. The assistant state conservationists for field operations (ASTCs-FO) will need to submit the request as soon as possible to meet program deadlines.

Documentation will be forwarded to the Financial Management (FNM) Staff for second level review as soon as all documentation is obtained, but no later than **July 7, 2014**. Per the Kansas Quality Assurance Plan (KQAP), a contract peer review should be completed prior to second level review. A contract peer review should focus on contract documentation.

All approved applications will be obligated by **August 1, 2014**.

### **Ranking Categories**

Ranking categories will be established in ProTracts **under EQIP** as such:

- Equus Beds GMD No. 2
- Equus Beds GMD No. 2—Beginning Farmer/Rancher (BF/R)
- Equus Beds GMD No. 2—Limited Resource Farmer/Rancher (LRF/R)
- Equus Beds GMD No. 2—Socially Disadvantaged Farmer/Rancher (SDF/R)
- Southwest Kansas GMD No. 3
- Southwest Kansas GMD No. 3—BF/R
- Southwest Kansas GMD No. 3—LRF/R
- Southwest Kansas GMD No. 3—SDF/R

- Big Bend GMD No. 5
- Big Bend GMD No. 5—BF/R
- Big Bend GMD No. 5—LRF/R
- Big Bend GMD No. 5—SDF/R

**NOTE:** LRF/R, BF/R, and SDF/R may apply under the ranking category specific to their resource concern or the ranking category specifically for their HU group.

### **Eligible Practices**

The FY2014 eligible practices lists contain the CPs eligible for financial assistance (FA) in each project area (see Attachments 2, 3, and 4). The SO will enter the payment schedule data into ProTracts and the Customer Service Toolkit (CST). New payment scenarios will be posted to the payment schedule data in the electronic Field Office Technical Guide (eFOTG), Section I—Cost Data.

The following Conservation Activity Plan (CAP) is an eligible CP for GMD No. 3 and GMD No. 5.

- CP 134—Conservation Plan Supporting Transition from Irrigation to Dryland Farming Plan

**NOTE:** Per EQIP policy, a maximum of three separate practice payments are allowed during the term of a contract for management practices.

### **CP Payment Limitations**

The following CPs FA caps are:

- 441—Irrigation System—Microirrigation—\$650/ac
- 442—Sprinkler System—\$650/ac

**NOTE:** Payment limitations for management practices are listed in the FY2014 EQIP Payment Schedule.

Supervisory district conservationists (SDCs) shall ensure payment limitations are correctly entered for each applicable ProTracts contract item number.

Continue to use the program specific narratives in CST beginning with the letters AW when applicable. If an application is not selected for funding, the CST conservation plan will need to be updated with non-program type narratives.

### **Ranking Criteria**

All applications will be entered in ProTracts as “Partnership” under Application Type. “State or Local Government” should be entered for partnership type.

The ProTracts Ranking Tool will be used to rank eligible applications. Guidance issued in Attachment 5 will be used to answer national priority questions.

Eligible land uses, state and local issue questions and points assigned, and additional requirements for each project area are outlined on Attachments 6, 7, and 8. Applications are

evaluated by LOCATION county. LOCATION county will be determined by the location of the point of diversion being treated.

Additional requirements for the GMD No. 5 include a **COPY** of an affidavit to be provided to the NRCS by the participant prior to obligation (see Attachment 9 for your information). Questions on this affidavit will be referred to GMD No. 5. **The NRCS employees are not to answer questions on this form.**

Some of the ProTracts Ranking Tool questions require the use of geospatial data. The Conservation Programs Geographic Information System Interface (CPGI) will be used to obtain this data. The application number in CPGI will match the application identification number from ProTracts.

### **Changes to FY2014 Ranking Categories**

- New land use designations and resource concerns have been revised for FY2014.
- Guidance has been added to the ranking criteria that a producer reports to the Division of Water Resources (DWR) or water districts will be used to determine the benchmark condition of water use in the ag operation for GMDs No. 2 and No. 3.
- Conservation Practice 449, Irrigation Water Management, is now required in the conservation plan and will receive financial assistance if not already established, per program policy in ranking categories for GMDs No. 2 and No. 3.
- The Farm Irrigation Index tool will now be used to calculate new water savings in the GMD No. 2 ranking criteria.

**Contact:** Please forward feedback and questions, through established channels, to Corey L. Nelson, Resource Conservationist, at 785-823-4580 or [corey.nelson@ks.usda.gov](mailto:corey.nelson@ks.usda.gov).

*(Signed)*

ERIC B. BANKS  
State Conservationist

Attachments